

was taken; and from the same bird, which has been kindly submitted to my examination by Mr. T. J. Moore, the Curator of this celebrated collection, I have drawn up the following short characters, which, when taken in conjunction with Mr. Wolf's figure, will, I hope, be sufficient to render the species recognizable without much difficulty.

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ACCIPITER PECTORALIS.

Falco pectoralis, in Mus. Antverpiano.

Supra niger, dorsi et scapularium tectricumque plumis albo marginatis, pileo nigro immaculato: torque collari postico et capitis lateribus rufis: remigibus obscure fuscis: cauda nigra, albo quater fasciata: subtus albus, plaga rictali et striga mediali gutturis nigris; pectore rufo, albo variegato: ventre toto albo nigroque transfasciato: rostro nigro, pedibus flavicantibus: long. tota 17, alæ 10·2, tarsi 2·3, rostri a rictu 1·1 poll. Angl. et dec.

Hab. (ut dicitur) in America meridionali.

Mus. Antverp. et Derbiano.

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The two examples of this bird in the Derby Museum (No. 393 and 393, a) were purchased by the late Lord Derby from Mr. Gould, in September 1841. They have no locality marked upon them. The species is very remarkable as being so nearly a miniature, as regards general appearance, of *Spizaëtus ornatus*, although certainly a true Accipitrine. The wings reach to about one-half of the length of the tail; the third, fourth, and fifth primaries are nearly equal and longest.

XXXIV.—On *Birds collected and observed in the Interior of British North America*. By Captain BLAKISTON, R.A. (Part I.)

By the "Interior of British North America," I mean that portion of the continent lying to the north-west of Canada which may be said to be bounded by the western base of the Rocky Mountains, the 49th parallel of north latitude, Canada, Hudson's Bay, and the Arctic Sea, and which has hitherto usually gone by the somewhat indefinite appellation of the "Hudson's Bay Company's Territories" and the "Fur Countries."

Rather than give localities which require some amount of geographical knowledge to make out, I have referred to the great

physical features of this region in the following manner :—"Hudson's Bay" means the coast of that bay ; "between Hudson's Bay and Lake Winipeg," the densely wooded region to the east of that lake ; "Saskatchewan Plains," the high prairie-plains between the north branch of that river and the international boundary ; "Lower Saskatchewan," the country bordering that river below its forks ; and "Red River Settlement," the settlement on the river of the same name which flows into the south end of Lake Winipeg.

The observations here do not extend beyond the western edge of the Rocky Mountains ; whence to the Pacific a distinct fauna and flora prevail, which cannot be included with the present. Most of the specimens I have collected are in the Royal Artillery Institution at Woolwich, where they can be inspected by any ornithologist. The nomenclature adopted is that given in Professor Baird's recent Report on the Birds of North America, unless the contrary is stated.

Order ACCIPITRES.

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43 1. *FALCO ANATUM*. ♀ No. 48. A female, from Saskatchewan Plains, on Bow River, near Rocky Mountains, August 6th, 1858. Length 19 in., wing 14. Eye brown, feet yellow, bill blue horn-colour, cere yellow.

This species, although extending from Greenland to Cuba, has not yet been found on the Pacific slope of North America ; and Professor Baird, of the Smithsonian Institution, considers that the locality of my specimen (longitude 115° W.) is the most westerly yet ascribed to this bird. *F. nigriceps* takes its place on the Pacific, but may probably be found in the district of Mackenzie River in the far north, where the Rocky Mountains do not appear to offer so great an impediment to the mingling of the fauna and flora of the two sides of the continent as is the case to the southward.

2. *FALCO COLUMBARIUS*. ♂ No. 64. ♀ No. 65. North branch Saskatchewan River, April 6th, 1858. Male : length 11 $\frac{3}{8}$ in., wing 7 $\frac{7}{8}$, tail 5. Legs and feet yellow, claws black ; bill horn-colour, greenish towards the base.

Female: same date. Length $13\frac{1}{8}$ in., wing $8\frac{1}{3}$, tail $5\frac{3}{4}$. Legs and feet somewhat duller yellow than male, bill same colour as male, and cere greenish yellow. These two specimens had large intestinal worms, but were in very good condition.

No. 117 ♂. Forks of the Saskatchewan, May 25th, 1858. Length $11\frac{1}{2}$ in., wing $7\frac{3}{4}$, tail 5. Feet, cere, and space round the eye bright yellow, bill bluish horn-colour. Female shot at the same nest: length $12\frac{3}{4}$ in., wing $8\frac{1}{2}$, tail $5\frac{1}{2}$. Feet, cere, and space round the eye bright yellow. The nest of these birds was placed ten feet from the ground in a clump of willows and aspen, and contained four eggs.

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The Pigeon Hawk appears to be as abundant and widely distributed in the northern as in the temperate regions of North America, where it is found to range from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Sir John Richardson mentions it as common on the coasts of Hudson's Bay, and I can bear testimony to the same fact in the interior.

It is curious that in both pairs of birds mentioned above, which I examined carefully, long intestinal worms were found.

In my collection are three eggs of this species, with the male bird belonging to the nest. M. Bourgeau, the indefatigable botanist of Captain Palliser's late exploring expedition, obtained a female specimen and eggs.

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3. *ASTUR ATRICAPILLUS*. ♀ No. 89. Forks of Saskatchewan River, May 7th, 1858. Length 24 in., wing $13\frac{3}{4}$, tail 11. Bill blue horn-colour, feet light dull yellow, cere light greenish yellow, eye reddish orange. Shot off the nest, which contained four eggs.

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No. 13 ♂ young. Saskatchewan River, October 14th, 1857. Length $22\frac{3}{4}$ in., wing 13. Eye bright yellow, feet and cere light dirty greenish yellow.

My specimens of the American Goshawk agree in measurements with the dimensions given by Professor Baird; but the total lengths given in 'Fauna Bor.-Am.' are considerably greater, which leads me to think that they are measurements of the preserved specimens. I take this opportunity of stating that all the measurements given by me, which can be influenced by the process of preparation, are from the specimens before skinning; and that the colours of the different parts which change after

death, unless otherwise stated, have been taken at the time of the bird being killed. Moreover, the sex, if inserted, has been ascertained by dissection.

4. *ACCIPITER COOPERII*. ♀ No. 114. Forks of Saskatchewan River, May 21st, 1858. Length 19 in., wing $9\frac{1}{2}$, tail $8\frac{1}{2}$. Cere light yellowish green, feet yellow, bill blue horn-colour.

The first notice of Cooper's Hawk from the interior of British North America is here recorded; it was obtained by M. Bourgeau, and belonged to a nest in a balsam poplar, from which he procured two eggs of a bluish-white colour, which measured 1·8 to 1·9 in. by 1·4. The eyes were damaged by shot, but the irides appeared to have been orange. I have no other particulars of this species, which appears to be much commoner on the Atlantic coast of the United States.

5. *ACCIPITER FUSCUS*. ♀ No. 101. Forks of Saskatchewan River, May 15th, 1858. Length 13 in., wing $7\frac{3}{4}$. Eye orange, feet and cere yellow.

No. 165. Thirty miles south of Fort Edmonton, Sept. 27th, 1858. Length $14\frac{1}{2}$ in., wing $8\frac{1}{4}$.

6. *BUTEO SWAINSONI*. ♂ No. 78. Forks of Saskatchewan River, May 5th, 1858. Length 21 in., wing $15\frac{3}{4}$, tail 8. Feet yellow, cere light yellow, bill bluish horn-colour.

Another male, Saskatchewan Plains, May 4th, 1858. Length 20 in., wing $15\frac{3}{8}$. Eye chocolate-hazel, feet and cere light yellow, bill bluish black, colour of plumage same as No. 78.

Another male, forks of Saskatchewan River, May 18th, 1858. Length $19\frac{3}{4}$ in., wing $15\frac{1}{2}$. The rusty bars on the belly and femorals rather more distinct; hardly so much white on the throat; bars on upper part of tail not so dark as No. 78.

Another male, forks of Saskatchewan River, May 25th, 1858. Length $19\frac{3}{4}$ in., wing 15, tail 8. Eye chocolate-brown, feet and cere yellow, bill dark-blue horn-colour, plumage same as No. 78.

No. 108 ♀. Forks of Saskatchewan River, May 18th, 1858. Length $21\frac{1}{4}$ in., wing $16\frac{1}{2}$, tail 9. Stomach contained three toads.

This well-marked species is abundant in the neighbourhood of the Saskatchewan River; and out of a number shot I have preserved two fine, well-marked individuals. M. Bourgeau was also

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fortunate enough to procure eggs identified by specimens, which are white, more or less blotched with red.

The white throat in conjunction with the dark breast is so marked a feature that this might well be called Swainson's White-throated Buzzard.

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45 7. *BUTEO BOREALIS*. ♂ No. 153. Kootsnay Pass, Rocky Mountains, August 21st, 1858. Male and female, killed on the 15th of May, 1858, at the forks of Saskatchewan: had red tails. This bird utters a peculiar squealing cry very frequently.

At the time of my ascending to a nest of this bird (of which, unfortunately, I have only one of the two eggs then taken remaining), my partner, although the birds made continual sweeps near me, failed in killing either. I have, however, very little hesitation in pronouncing the bird to be the Red-tailed Hawk, and the same as that of which I have the tail and feet, and of which I saw numbers at the Red River Settlement in the spring of 1859. The cry is very peculiar, and caused me to give the bird, for the time, when I had no books of reference, the name of the Squealing Buzzard.

8. *ARCHIBUTEO LAGOPUS*. Although I saw numbers of this patchwork-looking bird, I never obtained a specimen.

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46 9. *ARCHIBUTEO SANCTI-JOHAANNIS*. Head, feet, and wings preserved, and three eggs obtained by M. Bourgeau: wing 18 in. long. Saskatchewan Plains, summer of 1858. The eggs are white, with slight blotches of red: rather more spherical than those of *A. ferrugineus*.

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46 10. *ARCHIBUTEO FERRUGINEUS*. ♀ No. 86. Between north and south branches of Saskatchewan River, April 30th, 1858. Length $26\frac{1}{2}$ in., wing $18\frac{1}{8}$, tail $9\frac{1}{2}$. Eye brown-hazel, feet and cere yellow, bill dark horn-colour. Remains of Ground-Squirrel in stomach.

The eggs taken from the nest of No. 86 were four in number. The nest, which was placed in an aspen tree, 20 feet from the ground, was composed of sticks, $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet across, and lined with buffalo wool. Those taken from another nest near the same

locality were five in number. This nest was situated in a tree only 10 feet above a lake.

A specimen and two eggs by M. Bourgeau, Saskatchewan Plains, July 9th, 1858. Skin 25 in. long, wing 17. This is the first instance of the eggs of this bird having been collected; they are of a white colour, plain, or blotched more or less with reddish brown.

This bird feeds on the Ground-Squirrels so common on the prairies; hence, I suppose, its name of "Californian Squirrel-Hawk."

It is a fine powerful bird, and, in distinction from other hawks, is known to the Cree Indians by the name of Sa-qua-ta-mov, of which word I can find no interpretation; but they have shown their knowledge by classing the Black Hawk, last mentioned, along with this one, and calling it the black Sa-qua-ta-mov.

The way in which birds adapt their habits to circumstances is strikingly shown on the prairie, where hawks and ravens will build even on low bushes; and, again, along rivers where wolves are numerous, Canada Geese sometimes lay their eggs in the old nests of eagles.

11. *CIRCUS HUDSONIUS*. Nos. 76, 92, 161. Saskatchewan Plains to Rocky Mountains, 1858.

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This bird is abundant throughout the interior; the individuals vary much in the colour and markings of their plumage. From the fact, I suppose, of its feeding on snakes, it is known among the Crees as the "Snake-hunter." I have, however, never found anything but the remains of mice in the stomachs of many of these birds which I have opened.

In 1858 I observed it as early as April 1st near the forks of the Saskatchewan; while the spring following I did not observe it before the 28th of that month at Red River Settlement. The progress of the seasons of these two years was, however, very different.

12. *AQUILA CANADENSIS*. On Saskatchewan River till November 18th, 1858. Tail-feathers highly prized by the Indians.

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13. *HALIAËTUS LEUCOCEPHALUS*. Head, wing, and feet of an example obtained by M. Bourgeau, Saskatchewan Plains,

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summer, 1858. Wing 23 in. long. Common on Saskatchewan River, and thence to Hudson's Bay. It is sometimes seen in February, and remains until the rivers close in November. I was not fortunate enough to procure a specimen of either of these Eagles.

As has been observed by Sir John Richardson, the Indians divide the year into moons, each of which is named after some natural occurrence. Among them are the Eagle and Goose Moons, at the times of the year when these birds first make their appearance after the winter. Now, although this lunar reckoning may be very well for intervals of time, it is far from satisfactory in fixing certain periods of the year; for as the number of days in a year is not divisible by the number of days in a lunar month, so each year the same moon is about eleven days earlier, and in three years would take the place of the former one.

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14. *PANDION CAROLINENSIS*. I regret that I cannot give a single instance of the occurrence of the Fish-Hawk in the interior of British North America. It is, however, by no means an uncommon bird, and was observed by myself from Hudson's Bay to the western base of the Rocky Mountains. It is rather early in going south in the fall of the year.

15. *BUBO VIRGINIANUS*. ♀ No. 38. Forks of the Saskatchewan, January 29th, 1858. Length 23 in., wing 15. Eye bright yellow.

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16. *BUBO ARCTICUS*. ♂ No. 52. Forks of the Saskatchewan, March 25th, 1858. Length $22\frac{1}{2}$ in., wing $4\frac{1}{4}$, tail $9\frac{1}{4}$, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quill-feathers nearly equal and longest. Eye very bright amber-yellow. Agrees with *B. arcticus* of the 'Fauna Bor.-Am.'

17. *NYCTEA NIVEA*. No. 186. Hudson's Bay, common throughout the north; follows the Willow Grouse south in winter.

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18. *SURNIA ULULA*. No. 21. Forks of the Saskatchewan, November 7th, 1857.

No. 39 ♂. Same locality, January 29th, 1858.

[To be continued.]

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